

Charity Directed :
OR,
The Way to Give
A L M S
TO THE GREATEST
ADVANTAGE.

In a Letter to a Friend.

WRITTEN BY
Richard Kidder, Rector of St. Martin Outwich in London.

Hieron : ad Paulinum

*Tu Considera ne Christi Substantiam imprudenter Effundas, id est,
ne immoderato judicio rem Pauperum tribuas non Pauperibus,
&c.*

Sen. de Benef. l. i. c. i.

Beneficia sine ulla delectu magis projicimus quam damus.

LONDON,

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CRISTY DIRECTED:

A. I. M. 2

ADVANTAGE

In a Letter to a Friend.

WRITTEN BY

THE REV. J. C. H. ...

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Pickering & Chalk 1/2/34 No. 157 2/6 (2422)

CHARITY DIRECTED:

OR,

The Way to Give ALMS to the GREATEST ADVANTAGE.

S I R,

YOU have well Observed, That of that little which men bestow in Alms-giving, a very small part gains its end and turns to Account. And you were pleased at several times to desire me to give my thoughts how a good Man may be Directed to give to the best Advantage. I have not that Opinion of my self, as to think I am fit to give you Advice, nor that mean Opinion of you, as to suppose you need it. You have been Practised a great while in doing kindneses, and I do not believe that you need either Direction or Motive. You are of the Number of those that are Taught of God to Love one another, and would but others follow your Example, there would not be so many Objects of Charity: But since the Work it self carries with it so great an Invitation, and you are pleased to desire it, I shall very readily consent. And if you conceive what I Offer may be of any Use, dispose of this Paper as you please. Now, in Order to the Directing a good man to give his Alms to the best Advantage, and that they may do the most good, I shall speak to the following severals.

First, I shall shew how he may so give, as it may turn most to his own Account.

Secondly, How he may so do it, as may turn to the greatest Advantage of the Receiver.

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Thirdly,

Charity Directed : Or,

Thirdly, How he may so Order his Affairs, as that he may have something to bestow.

And before I speak to any of these severals, I shall take the Liberty to speak of the Necessity of giving Alms, and of the Arguments and Motives from whence this Excellent Work may be recommended to us.

And I am very certain that there is great need that Men should be very earnestly excited to so good a Work at this time. There are about this City of *London* some hundreds of Families (you would believe me, if I should say some thousands) that are under very pressing Necessities. And, if there be not care taken, very many amongst them will be starved. And the great Poverty of these Families also hath been to them Unavoidable. For it hath fallen upon them, partly, through Age, partly, through the number of Children, and in great measure for want of Trade and Employment. Nor would it be any hard Matter to give you an Account how it comes to pass, that very many are not able to get their Bread by that Employment which sometime since afforded them a competent Subsistence. But, besides that I shall not need to acquaint you with it, the thing it self will not Answer any part of my Design. I am not Obligated to shew How Men have fallen into Calamity, but to contribute what I can towards their Rescue and Relief. And when my poor Brother is fallen into the Ditch, I do not think my self Obligated to Represent how many ways there are of falling in, but to do my utmost towards the lifting him out. I shall therefore (without any more of Preface) shew what great Reason we have to Compassionate, and Help our poor Brother, to do him kindnesses, and shew him Mercy. God grant that our works of Mercy may hold some proportion to the Obligations that lye upon us to shew it.

First, this is the end of our being what we are, and of our enjoying what we do Possess; that we might do good to others. The Rich Man is Gods Almoner and Steward, and the Poor are his Receivers: He shall not need to busie his Head in Building larger Barns, when there are so many Living Houses already Built to his hand: The Empty and Hungry Poor are the best Granaries. Our Talent was given us to be laid out to the Honour of our Master, and the benefit of our Fellow-Servant. *Unaqueque anima venit*

in hunc Mundum cum aliquibus Dominicis pecuniis. We do all of us come into the World with some of our Lords Money in our hand; and this was given us (not to hide in the Earth, *Mat. 25. 25. 27.*) but to Trade withal for our Brothers Advantage. The Blind Man that carried the Lame upon his shoulders, had the benefit of the Cripples Eyes for the use of his own Feet; and it puts us fairly in mind how Useful we may be to one another. And we ought to judge this the very Reason why we excell one another in any Gift or Endowment, that we may be helpful to those to whom the Divine wisdom hath dealt out these Blessings more sparingly. *Job*, that great and good Man of the East, understood this. *I was Eyes* (says he) *to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lame: I was a Father to the Poor, and the Cause which I knew not, I searched out.* He did not cause the Eyes of the Widow to fail, nor eat his Morsel without the Fatherless; he saw none perish for want of Clothing, nor any Poor without Covering; the Loins of the poor Blessed him, and they were warmed with the Fleece of his Sheep, *Job 29. 15, 16. Chap. 31. v. 16.* And yet at that time *Job* had seven Sons, and three Daughters to provide for, which is now the great Objection against works of Mercy. This is also the End of our Spiritual Mercies, *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to Profit withal*, *1 Cor. 12. 7.* In that sense also what we are, we are for the good of one another. In the Natural Body: *The Eye cannot say, I have no need of thee; nor the Head to the Foot, I have no need of you, v. 25.* For as the Eye is useful to descry a danger, so is the Hand to keep off the stroke, and the Feet to run from it. He that Lives and does no good, makes void the End of his Creation: He is like an unfruitful Tree, that Cumbers the Ground, and is worth no more than its Trunk or Body may be improved unto. He is the Worlds uneasy Load and Burden, and may be spared without any miss or loss at all. There is nothing more insignificant than the man that does no good. He that Does nothing, is more impertinent than he that Is not at all. *Vacua est vita quam non implet cura bene vivendi.* Our Life is but a Parenthesis, an heap of Cyphers, that amounts to no summe or sense if we onely Live and do no good. God does not give us Riches to hoord up; we are not Proprietors, but Stewards. They are entrusted to us to dispende, and they have a Charge upon them.

They,

Ut arbor infacunda tanti est in pretio quam lignum ejus in trunco. Apulei. Apol. pro seipso.

Impertinentior est qui nihil agit quam qui nihil est.

Charity directed; Or,

They are ours, *Cum suo onere*, with the charge and burden that lyes upon them. God gave them that we might distribute them, and if we do it not, we are unjust. Riches are called unrighteous Mammon, and as they are unrighteous when they are unjustly gotten, so they are when they are unjustly detained: And in that fence those words are understood. *Luk. 16. 12.*

Secondly. This is the way to become like God, and like our Blessed Saviour. We can do nothing more safe in it self, nor that is more for our own advantage and our brothers than to imitate him whom we worship: And certainly it was truly said that *speaking the Truth, and doing Good* makes us like God. And we are commanded to be followers of Him, as dear Children, *Eph. 5. 1.* Now God is good, and does good, and by doing good we become like him. Our Saviour uses this Topick, when he perswades his followers to do good even to their enemies. *That they might be the Children of their father which is in heaven, who maketh his Sun to rise upon the Evil and upon the Good. Mat. 5.*

45. God feeds the hungry that never give him thanks, cloaths the naked that do not praise him, gives Health and Riches to the Atheist and unbeliever, to them that love him not and desire not the knowledge of his wayes. How many are there that deserve no light and yet he makes his Sun to arise upon them! How many that deserve to live upon an Earth of Brasse, and under an Heaven as hard as Iron, and yet he sends them the former and latter Rain. And this will make us like our Blessed Saviour who went about doing good. His very miracles were the effects of his *Mercy* as well as *Power*; and spake him to be *Good* as well as *Great*: They were works of *kindness* and *benignity*, and did at once confirm his doctrine, and rescue and relieve the afflicted and oppressed. And though he might have confirmed his doctrine by miracles that should have wrought terror and astonishment, yet he rather chose to work saving ones. He taught the ignorant; and by a miracle, feeds the hungry, restores the sick, heals the infirm, raises the dead, and seeks and saves that which was lost. He conversed with those that stood in need of his assistance: We hear of him among Lepers or Lunatics, Blind or Bed-ridden; among the hungry or the sick, affording his aid to those that needed it. And after his many labours and travails, his excellent speeches and

*Quam multi indigni luce sunt,
et tamen deus
oritur & Sen.
de Benef. l. 1.*

and works of *Mercy*, at the last he prays for his Enemies that hang him upon a Cross. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And verily if we consider how very short our Saviours life was, and that not much more than one tenth part of that remained when he entered upon his ministry; and again remember the many works he did in that time (besides the very many that are not recorded; *Joh. 20. 31*) that is, how many he fed, and Taught, and Healed, and Dispossessed, and Raised; and that in Sundry places distant from one another, as we may truly say of our Saviour what the Book of Wisdom (*ch. 4. v. 13.*) says of *Enoch*, that *He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time*: So certainly if we be the genuine disciples of so good a Lord his Example will teach us mercy and kindness to our Brother.

Thirdly. We are bound to relieve our Brother as there is due from us a Tribute of Thankfulness to God for his mercies and that upon these following accounts.

1. For giving and preserving to us any of the Comforts of this present life. It was churlishness in *Nabal* to deny a morsel of bread to *David* and his servants, who had been a wall about what he had by day and by night. When our *Neighbours house* hath been thrown down by the flames, the mercy of God hath kept ours *standing*: When my *Brothers* vessel hath been split upon the rocks, our Ships have come to shore safe and well laden. When my friend grows poor by my side, the blessing of God (for nothing else could do it) hath made me rich. We have escaped those dangers which have swallowed up our friends and relatives. Our children are living and well, when the next door will lead us to a weeping Rachel, that mourns for hers because they are not. Others have no abiding place, no peace, no health or safety, when we sit down quietly under our vine and fig-tree. Do we owe nothing to Gods care for this? Who is it that hath made the difference? Shall we not pay some tribute for so many mercies? It will become us to look over our store and pay some tribute of praise. Let us look back and we shall find that we have been preserved from robbers and pestilence, from sword and famine; And that also when many have fallen on our right and left hand, We have been restored from a sick bed; when we were within the prospect of death

death, not to say of the terrors of Hell. These things call upon us loudly to do good to our poor Brother, when God has shewed so much mercy to us. If we do it not we may justly expect that God should do by us as *David* intended to do by *Nabal*, that he should destroy us and ours. For in this case our mercies are forfeited, and they Esteem, and we may expect God will seize and turn us out of possession. God can soon send a fire among thy goods, leave thee in the hands of Thieves and Murderers: He can soon smite thy Child, blast thy Corn, destroy thy Cattel, and render thee as naked as the world found thee, if thou do not pay thy tribute of praise. Fear not then to offer that to God which is so due to Him, and so uncertain to thy self. That which a fire may consume, or thieves steal, or moth corrupt, and which the mercy of God alone preserves unto thee.

2. For exempting and excusing us from the costly service the Jewes were obliged unto. Their service was not only *Carnal* but *Costly*, To say nothing of their several tithings, (which was far beyond the proportion of one in ten) and their Sabbatical year, when they neither sowed, nor reaped, nor claimed propriety; Their Morning and Evening Sacrifices throughout the year, besides the additionals upon sabbaths and new Moons and Festivals, the Passover, Pentecost, and feast of Tabernacles (besides the day of expiation) their Oblations or תרומות that were constantly paid to the Priests, and their long and frequent journeys to *Jerusalem*, and their offerings there, for their sins and trespasses, for their first born and of their first fruits; besides their payments for the service of the Tabernacle, their other offerings, and Emergent expences which the law required (not to speak of their *lex agraria* and the other precepts which precluded the opportunities of becoming greatly rich) were things of great charge, and which did yearly expend a great proportion of their Estates. And I fear that our love to the world is so great, and our devotion so small that we should have been very uneasie under such a service, and perhaps have gone as unwillingly to Gods Temple as the Beast we should have sacrificed would have gone to have been slain at the Altar. But now since God requires nothing more of us but to do justly, and to love mercy and walk humbly before God, we ought out of gratitude to shew kindness to one another.

3. For

Quid ergo dubitamus bene collocare id, quod forsantibi eripiet aut unum latrocinium, aut existens repente proscriptio, aut hostilis aliqua direptio
Lactant. l. 6. c. 12.

Scalig. de Decimis.

3. For Spiritual Mercies and the great care God hath taken of our souls. These loudly call upon us to do good to the Poor. Hath not God given his Son to *Die*, that we might *Live*? Hath he not Blessed us with the Revelation of his will? And hath he not given an assurance of the aid of his Divine Spirit? Hath he not given us the *means* of *Grace*, and the *hope* of *Glory*? Hath he not lengthened out to us the *time* and *space* of *Repentance* when there are many placed amongst the *Dead* and *Damned*? Does he not still follow us with Importunities and Beseechings that we would turn and live? Does he not wooe and beseech us to be Happy? Does he not do it, though he need us not, and will be nevertheless happy, though we are miserable? Oh, that Men would retire a little and be alone, and well consider and ponder upon these things! Let us but think how deplorably miserable we were if God had not thus provided for us! Let us but suppose our selves bereft of the means of *Grace*, and of all hope of *Glory*! who could express the horror of such a Condition as should deprive us of these Benefits: No Tongue could express, no Heart conceive the greatness of such a *Misery*. Shall we then think much, after we have received so much *Mercy* from God, to do good to an *Enemy*, to do good to a poor Man, to help a *Widdow*, or a *Fatherless Child*? Shall our eye be evil when our Lords hath been so good? Shall we spare our Purse when God hath not spared his Son? Shall we shut up our Bowels against our Brother after such great pity shewen us from God? Methinks such love of God should thaw and unlock the most frozen heart! Methinks it should enter into hearts of stone! And methinks no Breast should be so impregnable as not to surrender to such a Force and Power! We must needs yield, and say, *What shall we render to the Lord for all his Mercies!* And think it a poor acknowledgment of our Thankfulness to bestow our Goods upon the Poor.

Fourthly, we are bound to help the Poor, and to do good to the Needy, because we shall be Judged hereafter according to the good we do here. A great Truth this is, however we dispute or distinguish our selves out of our Duty. We are witty and crafty to find a Cheap way to Heaven, to contrive a Faith that shall save our Souls, and our Estates also: A Faith that shall Justifie our Persons, whether it cleanse our Hearts or no. VVe are careful of giving God too much; and though we profess a great

Charity Directed; Or,

esteem for our Religion, yet we take care that it keep its distance, and Usurp not over our Temporal Concerns. We are so much against *Merits*, that we suspect *good works also*. We Divide between God and the World. God shall have *good Words*, some *faint intentions*, a few *cold Prayers*; but an *hearty Love*, an *unwearied diligence*, and *vigorous Endeavours* we reserve for the World. VVell, so it is, we are crafty, and we flatter our selves; but our craft will but Ruine us. VVe shall find it a great Truth, that he who shews no Mercy shall Receive none. Let us not deceive our selves the time draws on apace, when we shall give a severe Account of our Time and our Abilities, our Estates and Opportunities; in a word, of all our Lords Money that we have received. And much shall be Required of them that have Received much. VVe shall not onely give Account how we get, but how we use our Estates: And not onely the *Oppressor* and *unjust Steward*, but the *Unprofitable Servant* shall be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven. VVe are told how the Sentence will run hereafter, *Depart ye Cursed* (not because ye Oppressed the Poor, and grieved the VVidow, but) *because I was hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink, &c.* 'Tis Mercy makes way, and leads us to the greatest Mercy: *Come ye Blessed of my Father, &c.* (not because ye did Miracles, or Suffered Martyrdom, or Lived a single Life, or used Severities to your Bodies; not because you went on Pilgrimages, and Visited Shrines and Holy Reliques, but) *I was an hungry, and ye gave me Meat, &c. Mat. 25.*

Fifthly, Shewing Mercy to one another is more pleasing to God than other services which were not onely of his own Appointment, but had also a particular reference and Relation to Him. *To do good and Communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* Now, God may be said to be well pleased with our doing good with this Sacrifice of Mercy. (1.) In Opposition to the Bloody and Legal Sacrifices that were prescribed by the Law of *Moses*: They were Sacrifices properly so called, and of Gods appointment: They were Homages and Acknowledgments of the Divine Sovereignty; and such as were in Use both before the Law, and before the Flood, among Gods People, and among the Heathen: These did God Command and bear witness to with Fire from Heaven, and therefore with these Sacrifices God was pleased.

But

But yet was more pleased with *Mercy* than *Sacrifice*, even then when Bloody Sacrifices were Commanded. This pleased him better than the Fat and Blood that was presented at his Altar. God did not delight in Burnt-Offerings, nor Calves of a Year old, nor in Thousands of Rams, nor in ten thousand Rivers of Oyl, nor in the Fruit of our Body for the sin of our soul; but Required of his worshippers that they should *do justly and love Mercy*, &c. *Mic.* 6. 6, 7, 8. The unmerciful Man was always unwelcome to Gods Altar: he frowned upon *Cain*, whatever his Oblation was, who did not Love his Brother. Acts of Mercy and Kindness he always smelt a sweet savour in. For bloody Sacrifices they were never welcom alone, or for their own sake, nor were they always to continue. VVhen the Lamb of God was Offered up, and the Temple fallen down, they were to cease: But neither the Death of Christ, nor the Fall of a Temple shall put an end to these Spiritual Sacrifices. This Christian Charity and Compassion is a Fire that must burn in our hearts for ever, now the fire upon the Altar of Brass hath of so long a time been put out. Among the several sorts of Oblations in the Law of *Moses*, there was one sort which was not Typical, nor was it to be done away by the Coming and death of the *Messias*, and that was the *Terumah*: For this was an Oblation whose very Nature did import Prayer or Thanksgiving. By this Oblation Men acknowledged Gods goodness and Sovereignty, and testified their acknowledgment by Offering unto God out of their substance their Tributes of Praise. Now, these things we are concerned in as much as the Jews ever were; and shewing Mercy to our Brother is a Sacrifice of this Nature. And 'tis farther to be Observed, that for this *Terumah*, or Heave-Offering, it is never mentioned among those Sacrifices which the *Messias* was to do away when he should appear. Of the *Messias* the Prophet *Daniel* fore-tells that he should cause to cease the *Sacrifice and Oblation*, *Dan.* 9. 27. that is, all the Offerings of fire whatever, whether bloody Sacrifices or Meat-Offerings: The Apostle mentions *Burnt-Offerings* and *Sacrifices for Sin*, *Heb.* 10. 6. But then the *Terumah*, or Oblation of Praise was not done away. And to this purpose we have a saying among the Jewish Writers, *That every Corban or Sacrifice should cease, but that the Sacrifice of Praise should never cease.* Now, as the Poor are Gods Charge, as they bear his Image, and are his Receivers, so

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we Offer up this Sacrifice of Praise when we Communicate to them, and when we do it, we Offer up a Sacrifice more pleasing to God than he that Offered up Thousands of Fatlings upon his Altar. (2.) In contradistinction to the other Spiritual Sacrifices which we are bound to Offer up to God: He that Prays to God as he should, and Meditates of Heavenly things, he that Lauds and Magnifies the Name of God Offers up a Sacrifice which God is pleased with. But then he that does good to his Brother, he that helps the Poor, Teaches the Ignorant, Visits the Fatherless and Widow, Offers up a Sacrifice with which God is well pleased also; Ay, better pleased than with our other Devotions to himself. God delights to see us love one another: This is more pleasing to Him than our long Prayers, our deep Contemplation of Heavenly things, our Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving, our Passionate and rapturous Meditations. God is willing to stay for the Sacrifices we are to Offer unto him till we be first Reconciled to our Brother. Our shewing Mercy to him is pure Religion and undefiled. 'Tis this we shall come principally into account for at the last day, *Mat. 5. 23, 24. James 1. 27. Mat. 25.*

To what hath been said, let me add, that the work it self carries with it an Invitation. When we do good to another we do a kindness to our selves: we do Create our selves a new pleasure. He that shews Mercy to a Man in his misery does a double kindness at once (and 'tis hard to say which is the greater) one to his Brother, and another to himself. There is a Delight and Joy that Accompanies doing good, there is a kind of sensuality in it. As unmercifulness and Oppression are attended with horror, so are mercy and kindness with Joy and Pleasure. 'Tis a blessed thing to give.

I may add, that we all stand nearly related to one another: Every other man is a part of our selves, and partakes of that Nature which our Lord did not disdain to take upon him. The poorest Man is our Brother, and he is the Image of our God, and the price of our Lords Blood. The distance between us is not great, and if we look up but ten Generations above the Flood, we shall find that we are a Kin. Let no Man think himself unconcerned in the Poor, they are his Relatives, and when he provides for them he provides for his own. The Jews give us several Reasons why at the beginning of the World one man alone was made, from whom
all

all others were to be derived. Among the rest they tell us that it was because no Man should boast of his Parentage and Noble Blood beyond his Neighbour: But sure I am it does sufficiently recommend Charity and Mercy, as well as Humility. We ought to be kind one to another, as proceeding from the same stock. God hath made us all of *one Blood*, Acts 17. 26. And this should teach us sincere kindness, and hearty Love to one another. There are a certain People in the World that call *Men* by the Phrase of the *Moieties of others*. *Needy Men* they call *Needy Moieties*. And so sure they are: They are so many pieces of Humane Nature; one and the same Nature is shared out and divided amongst them: The same Blood runs in all their Veins, and the same breath is in the Nostrils of them all; they came from the same Root, and are of the same Family. This should teach us the greatest kindness to one another: He that is unmerciful to a man, is so to his own Nature. He that covers not the Naked, *hides himself from his own Flesh*, as the Prophet does express it, *Isa. 58. 7. Remember them that are in Bonds as bound with them, and them which Suffer Adversity, as being your selves also in the Body*, Heb. 13. 3. In that we are in the Body, we are partakers of the same Nature, as well as liable to the same miseries and Infirmities.

Again, I may well suppose my Brothers Case my own; for it hath been, or it may be ours. *Cuius est potest accidere quod cuicumque potest*. Now in this case let us but do as we would be done by: He that will not give, takes it for granted that he shall never want. For if he did but suppose he should himself want, he would be glad both of pity and relief, and therefore would think himself Obligated to shew it. We cannot tell what may happen, but we may well suppose that we shall not always be prosperous. 'Twill be well that we sometimes put the case to our selves, that we were stript of all our Wealth, and then we cannot sure but shew the Mercy that we would receive.

Besides all that hath been said, the mercy and pity we shew will not be unrewarded. If we give, God hath said he will repay. (*Prov. 19. 17.*) VVhat we give will be at once a *gift* and a *debt*. VVe may, if we will, when we give to the poor set down so much at such a time lent to God. There is no money we lay out turns to so good an account. The good man that shews mercy will not fail to receive it: God hath promised great mercy to the man

*Laflant. l. 6.
c. 10.
Sanhedrin. c. 4.
m. 5.*

*Mentag's Es-
says, l. 1 p. 106.*

Charity directed; Or,

man that shews it : That he shall be blessed, and delivered, and strengthened on the bed of languishing, and be made fat (*Prov. 22. 9. Ps. 41. 1. Prov. 11. 25.*) we shall need mercy e're long: 'Twill be seasonable on a sick bed, in a storm or tempest, in this or in another life. If we shew it we may hope to receive it. 'Tis the best way to make our Sickness tolerable, and our Death easie. 'Twas the Observation of one of the Ancients, *That in all his Reading he did not remember to have met with any Charitable Man that ever dyed an ill Death.* It is the most likely way to mercy upon our selves and our Posterity.

'Tis an Advantage to be born of merciful and Charitable Parents. I doubt not but the Children of such men fare the better for the mercy that their Fathers shewed. *I have been Young, and now am Old, yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread. He is ever Merciful and Lendeth, and his Seed is Blessed, Psal. 37. 25, 26.* I doubt not but many men now Living do fare the better for the Charity of their Ancestors: God pays them in their Children and Posterity. The recompence is conveyed by the hand of Heaven that is not Discerned; and when the Bread hath been many days upon the Water it is found again, and falls into the hands of those that succeed them, that first cast it away. And though the Children of such men may meet with straits, yet I doubt not but that they are the special care of heaven. We read a sad Complaint of a VVidow, who cryed to *Elisha. Thy Servant, my Husband (says she) is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord, and the Creditor is come to take away my two Sons to be Bond-men, 2 Kings 4. 1.* whose VVidow this was, the Text tells us not, but the Jewish writers do: They say she was the VVidow of *Obadiah*, and we have no cause to doubt it. The Time and Character agree well. *Thy Servant did fear the Lord*, says she: Now, *Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, 1 Kings 18. 3.* See now the Charity of this good man rewarded in his VVidow and his Sons. He had in a time of Famine fed an hundred Prophets with Bread and water, *1 Kings 18. 4.* And now God multiplies her little Oyl, and by a miracle preserves the good mans VVidow and Rescues her two Sons.

The very Heathen could tell us that the gods dealt indulgently with some men upon the Account of their Parents and Ancestors. That some men came to a Crown upon the Account of a good man that

Chald. Paraphras. of Kimchi & R. Solomon in lo. um.

Sen. de benef. l. 4. c. 32.

that was one of their Ancestors. And perhaps it would be no hard matter to reckon up a great many examples to this purpose. But that will not be needfull: 'Tis enough God hath said that he will repay the mercifull man. The good man serves God for greater ends than these worldly things. He is satisfied that he serves a good master when he serves God, and 'twill be to him all one when God makes his word good. He gives perfect credit to God, and 'twill be well for him whether he meet with a reward or his children after him, whether he meet with it in this life or in the next.

I adde, That to shew mercy to the poor is the best use that riches can be put to. VVere it not for this, poverty hath several advantages above them. It hath less of care, of envy, and makes us less obnoxious to an account hereafter. 'Tis use gives riches a colour; that makes them weighty and valuable, and nothing gives, them so great a price as that they give us the advantage of doing kindneses. This is that which the Apostle directs rich men to, viz: *To do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* 1 Tim. 6. 18; 19.

*Argento nullas
color est nisi
splendeat usus.*

I might after all this put you in mind of many great examples to provoke us to do good to the needy.

Surely the heathen world will rise in judgement against many titular Christians and will condemn them: Though they had not those obligations upon them to bind them; nor that light to guide them; nor those promises to incourage them, nor those motives to excite them that we have, yet they went beyond many of us. What would they not do and suffer for the generall good of their Commonwealth! What hardships or death did they refuse? *Curtius* and the *Decij* devoted themselves to destruction for the safety of their Country. *Quin. Fabius* sold his farm to redeem the Captives of the Commonwealth. The *Roman Caesar* reckoned the day lost in which he had not done a kindness: Another of the Heathen Emperors thanks the Gods (as his phrase is) for two things; that he never wanted relief from others, and then, that when he desired to relieve a poor man he never wanted means to do it. Their Philosophy had taught them that which we have not learnt from the school of Christ.

*Marc. Antonin.
L. 4. S. 14.*

And

And yet we do not want great examples among the ancient Christians. They loved one another greatly insomuch that the Heathen world took great notice of it. VVe read of some men that made themselves slaves for the good of others. And *Paulinus* though a Bishop, sold himself to be a captive to ransom a widows son. Their Charity was so great that they did not onely give their estates but very readily exposed their lives also for the sake of their brethren.

But there is nothing like the example of our Blessed Saviour: He became a Man that he might bring us to God; He made himself poor and mean, that we might be rich and exalted; and that he might make way for our Bliss, he submitted to a shamefull and painfull Death. A miracle of love! That hath all its dimensions; and that passeth all understanding.

Methinks we of all men should be taught of God to love one another; and (God having loved us so greatly) should need no motive to perswade us to love one another. VVe enjoy great blessings, and live in the hopes of life and immortality. of joyes that eye does not see, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entred into mens heart to conceive what it is.

VVe'll then let us put these things together and we shall find our selves constrained to shew mercy. 'Tis in it self a blessed work, and will make us like God and our Saviour: VVe shall do a kindness to our selves, and profit our neighbour at once. This course will ease our account hereafter, and adorn our Religion here. 'Tis an excellent way to exchange temporals for eternals; It does our brother good, and it pleaseth God. It blesses our store, and keeps the rest of the lump from Corrupting. It brings down many blessings on our selves and estates, and on our children. If we shew no mercy now, 'tis because we dare not Trust God, or we do not Love him; VVe doubt his Truth, or we question his Power: And if we do, are egregious hypocrites when we pretend to any faith in God, or love to our neighbour. Such a faith we may have as will save our Estates but will never save our Souls. And in vain we pretend to love God when we refuse to relieve our brother. I shall conclude with the words of the Apostle. *Who so hath this worlds goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little Children let us not love in Word, neither in tongue;*

Tongue, but in Deed, and in Truth, 1 John 3. 17. 18.

Having premised these things, and in that also complied with your Request, I shall now return to those severals which I propounded to speak to in the beginning of this Paper.

First, I shall shew how a Man may so give Alms as they may turn to his own Account. That is, I shall lay before the good Man some Rules of giving Alms that may secure the Duty, and make him certain of the Blessing. And they are these that follow.

1. He must do it deliberately, and in cold Blood: That is, he must take care that it be his own Act as much as may be. Hence it is that we many times lose our Reward because the good we do was not premeditated and designed, it was not the Issue and Result of our purpose: We are fermented into a Charitable paroxysm or heat by the Example of another; upon some sudden surprise, to gratifie a present humour, or some prevailing Passion. Perhaps, the Poor man surprises us, and he does it in Company; and then we think our Reputation concern'd, and we give something; or else he follows us with great Importunity, and we give to be rid of his Noise, and purchase our Quiet with our Alms. And in these cases we give, but did not intend; we bestow, but did not choose: And though we may do good in the Event, yet we Designed it not. And whatever good we do to another, we take not a course to do a kindness to our selves. And Men sometimes do a kindness, and Repent when they have done it. But that God accepts which we do deliberately and of Choice. That's our Act which we design and purpose before hand. For as that cannot be called Malice (how mischevous soever) which was not fore-thought and intended, no more can that be called Charity (how profitable soever otherwise) which was not Designed. God looks at our purpose, and accepts of that which we choose to do. To this purpose are the Apostles words to be understood:

Every Man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, 2 Cor. 9. 7. As he purposeth in his heart, i. e. as he resolved in himself before, so let him give, as a late Translation hath it. And surely 'tis a great Commendation of their Charity, of whom the Apostle affirms that they had begun before, not onely to do, but also to be forward a year before, 2 Cor. 8. 10. To be forward we render it, but the Greek signifies to be willing: That is, They

*Multi sunt qui
liberales facit
frontis infirmi-
tis. Sen.*

*Donne ce qu'il
aura resolu en
lui même de
donner.
vide. French
Translation,
Printed at
Mons.
T. 9. 1. 1. 1.*

had of themselves formed the Design the Year past, even before they were spoken to. To which sence the same Translation turns those words: And that it is the Readiness of Will and purpose that God regards is evident from what follows, v. 11, 12. And the Apostle would have the good man lay by him in store what he intends to bestow in Alms, 1 Cor. 16. 2. And the very Heathen have Observed that many Men do bestow their Benefits rashly and without Judgment, being hurried by an impetuous mind, as by a strong Wind, and he well Observes that those kindneses and Benefits come short of those which are done with Judgment, Consideration, and Constancy. So that 'tis very advisable, that we should before hand set apart so much for the Poor, and then 'tis ours no longer, and we may bestow it to no other Use than that to which we have Designed it; and after this, it must be our care to bestow it as we see most needful.

*Quæ beneficia
aquè magna
non sunt habenda
atque ea
quæ iudicio,
consideratè,
constanterque
delata sunt.
Cicero de Offic
l. 1.*

*Εὐταγὴν ἔωσεν
Theophyl. in lo-
cum.*

2. The next Rule I would give, is, that he give speedily: As we have Opportunity, or whiles we have time let us do good, Gal. 6. 10. That is, let us do it in our Life time, and because our Life is short and uncertain also, let us do it speedily. Let us make our Eyes our Overseers, and our Hands our Executors. 'Tis good when we lye a dying is neither so Praise-worthy, nor yet so safe: Besides, that he that was long before he did it, was a great while before he was willing. 'Tis small Charity to bestow that which we can keep no longer, and we run a peradventure in leaving that to others, which we might see done our selves. He takes the wisest course that takes the present time; and he that does not give presently, perhaps, will never give at all. Indeed our intention is rewardable, but 'tis so onely when it is sincere, and the best Evidence of its sincerity is to do good to our Brother when 'tis in the power of our hand. And thus Solomon does Advise us to do, Prov. 3. 27, 28. when we do what we can, our good will is Accepted. If we do not this, we have cause to fear we use a subter-refuge. The Apostle hath Ruled this case: If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Our Intention is then accepted when we can go no further. But he that can do it presently, and yet delays, does not do what he can, and according to what he hath. Our Time, and with it our Opportunities of doing good, is flying hastily from us, and there is no wisdom

dom or Operation in the Grave. It hath been thought good Advice that the Jew gave his Scholar, when he bid him Repent one day before he dyed; and that because he did thereby require him to Repent presently, because he could not tell but he might dye the next day. What good we do, let us do it quickly, or else perhaps, it will be too late. How many men have we known prevented in their Charitable intentions? We know not what a day may bring forth.

3. Let the Alms-giver take care that what he gives be the Effect of Divine Charity and Kindness. This Rule shall not need seem strange: For we may give (as the Apostles words suppose) all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burnt, and yet be void of Charity, 1 Cor. 13. 3. VWhatever we do of this Nature must proceed from the love of God, and be accompanied with a most hearty Love to our Brother, who is his Image. There may be many Considerations may incline us to give; tis our Love that makes it Rewardable. And then a Cup of Cold VVater given to a Disciple of Christ, *in the Name of a Disciple*, shall not lose a Reward, Mat. 10. 42. VVe must not onely Help, but we must Pity our Brother. Our Religion teaches us Mercy and Compassion: and we are Obliged by it to Pity as well as to Aid our Brother. It Commands us to put on Bowels of Mercy, Col. 3. 12. The Doctrine of the Stoicks allowed the good man to help, but forbad him to Pity and Compassionate the Needy. But we learn to do both from the Example and the Precepts of our Lord. Our Alms must be the Off-spring of our Charity and Kindness: and if we were allowed to be void of Pity and Compassion, 'tis to be feared our Relief would be but small. He is most likely to help his Neighbour that hath a great sense of his Misery. And Christianity hath provided better for the Poor than the Philosophy of the Stoicks. Our Gift without Kindness is like our Prayer without Devotion. It is not like to be great or lasting, or proportionate to our Brothers Needs, and the Obligations we are under to relieve him. If we love greatly, we shall give largely: But if we be void of bowels, no wonder that we abound not in good works.

Senec. de Clement. l. 2. c. 5.

4. He that gives Alms must have a great care of Pride and Ostentation. He must watch against it very severely and diligently. 'Tis our Saviours Rule: *Take heed that you do not your Alms*

Charity Directed; Or,

before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men; Verily I say unto you they have their Reward. But when thou doest Alms, let not thy Left hand know what thy Right hand doeth. That thine Alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall Reward thee openly, Mat. 6. 1. — Let him chase away every proud thought that would arise in his mind, and remember that when he hath done all he can, he is an unprofitable Servant: Otherwise he gives to himself, and not to the Poor. He hath an ill aim, and he does lose his Reward. I am far from thinking that we may not give openly, and in the view of others, we may do this; and it is sometimes needful, and at other times convenient. We are not strictly Obligated to give all our Alms privately. But we are indispensably Obligated to avoid Ostentation and vain-glory. And because we shall be most liable to this Temptation when we give publickly, therefore it is safest that we do it in secret. He that gives must have no other aim but to do good, and to approve himself to God.

5. He that gives must do it without any hopes of Amendments or Restitution. He must look for nothing back again: 'Tis our Saviours Rule, *Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your Reward shall be great, &c. Luke 6. 35.* We may Lawfully have respect to the recompence of a future reward. But we must have a great care that we expect not this from them whom we relieve.

6. Let him give to all. *Let us do good to all Men, Gal. 6. 10.* Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away, Mat. 5. 42. If thine Enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst, give him Drink, Rom. 12. 20. 'Tis enough that our Brother wants, this makes him a fit Object of our Mercy. Though he be a wicked man, and unthankful, yet we must relieve him. Though he be of another Opinion, of a different Religion, a Stranger, and an Alien, yet he is a Man, and we must help him. Where the Necessity is equal, let him first relieve the good man: But where it is not, he must give to him that needs most. And provided we give not what will minister to the Lust of an Evil man, we must give to him. And the farther our Charity extends,

extends, the more like it is to the Love of God. For though we say it begins at home (and I wish it did not with many of us end there too) yet it must go farther off, to our greatest Enemies, and the worst of men, if it be genuine, and of the right stamp.

7. He must do it with great Cheerfulness and Alacrity, *not grudgingly, or of Necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver;* 2 Cor. 9. 7. *It was the advice of Stracides;* In all thy Gifts shew a cheerful Countenance, *Eccles. 33. 9.* Let us not need Craning and Skiewing up to so Blessed a work. *He is an ill Soldier that follows his Leader with Sighs.* God is not pleased with the Sacrifice that we bring unwillingly: In Compliance with this Rule let us give as we would receive. Let us do it before we are asked: Let us seek after Objects of our Compassion. Let us prevent with kindness, and be before hand with our Brother. Let us make it appear that we are as willing to give, as the Needy to receive. There are some Cases in which we must do thus. Some men have nothing left but great Needs and great Modesty: Here we must seek out, and Enquire.

I shall not need to say, after all this, that he that gives Alms, must give what is his own: That is to be supposed. He must first be Just and pay his Debts, and make his Restitution, else he does but *Rob one to give to another*; and must never look that such Alms will atone for his injustice.

And thus, Sir, I have shewn how we may give to our own Advantage. We may now Adventure upon a safe Bottom: I am not able to tell you where any Trading or Wealthy man can put out his Silver to so safe a Bank. There's no man that Trafficks but runs an hazard, onely the good and prudent Alms-giver runs none at all. It would have been happy for many men that they had put out more of their Wealth this way. This would have turned to a great Account, when the course they took turned to none at all. I do not know but they might by this course have preserved their Estates, which have for want of this seasoning Perished and Consumed. For certainly if there be a God and a Providence, if the Holy Scriptures have not deceived us, there's no man takes a wiser course than he that shews mercy. And tis very sad to think that men should withhold their relief from the Poor, and that for fear of wanting their Estates, when this cranny course they take ruins and destroys them. God of his mercy grant that we may understand

Charity Directed; Or,

understand Our interest better. But I proceed to shew
Secondly, How a good man may so give alms as may turn to
the greatest advantage of the receiver, and do him that takes
them the greatest good.

It will be needfull to consider well here. For so it is that the
good man is often deceived, and what he gives sometimes turns
to no account, sometimes to an evil one, and does very frequent-
ly fall short of the greatest and best advantage. And I have often
thought it well worth the while to study the art of giving wisely,
'Tis with Alms as with seed; All does not prosper that is scatter-
ed abroad, it requires some skill and care to cast it well abroad
that it be not lost: And though we are obliged to give, and to do
it liberally, yet we must take care that we do it not negligently.
Indeed some will be lost, and no wisdom can prevent it, but then
it must be our care to place our Alms as well as we can. And we
must not cease to give because we have sometimes placed our
Alms ill, but have the more cause to contrive them to the best ad-
vantage. *In the Morning sow thy seed, and in the Evening*
with-hold not thine hand: For thou knowest not whether shall pro-
spere, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.
(Eccl. 11. 6.) Now what I have to offer in this matter may be
comprised in the following severalls.

1. The Almsgiver will be obliged to find fit objects of his char-
ity. There are those to whom our relief will be a double kind-
ness. And it must be our first care to find out to whom we may
give with the greatest advantage. *'Tis a kind of Sacrilege to*
give the poore money to those that are not poor. And 'tis next to
it to bestow it there where there is least need, and least reason to
give. We are not only to consider what we are to give, but to
whom. And where there are a great many objects before us, and
we cannot give to all, we are to consider whom we are obliged to
prefer.

And in the first place, and above all others, I would commend
poor house-keepers who are diligent and industrious; but either
through want of employment, through sickness, and a great
charge of children; or for want of money to buy in stock, or to
do it at the best hand fall into great necessities. There are many
of these persons that are very diligent, and very modest, willing
to labour and ashamed to beg. They struggle under great ne-
cessities

*Beneficia in
vulgus cum
largiri institu-
eris, perdenda
sunt multa ut
semel ponas
bene.*

*Pars sacrilegi
est rem paup-
erum dare non
pauperibus.
Aleronym. ad
Pammachium.*

ecessities, and use all honest arts to get a poor lively hood, and yet are not able to get bread. There are some amongst them that with seasonable relief, and with the loane of a little money would have been able to have supported, and to have employed themselves and others about them, and by their labours have subsisted comfortably; But for want of such help, have been either starved, or have fallen to beggery; if not to that, which is worse than any of them, dishonest and unjust courses. The poor man lies under a great temptation to doubt of Gods Providence and care; and through our cruelty, we let him sink under his load, and he falls under the temptation, and casts off the fear of God, and the poor man steals and looses his precious and immortal soul. I cannot reflect upon these things without some consternation of mind to think that there should be such things among us under the profession of so Excellent a Religion as ours is. It is great charity to enquire after such as these. And that we must do or else we shall not find them out. And I could wish that some good men in every Ward or Parish would give themselves the care of informing themselves of the number of such house-keepers about the City. It would be a blessed work to find them in order to their help and relief. I doubt not but there are many men would readily contribute towards the upholding these poor families. And to do what we can towards it, is a very great act of charity and Compassion: For certainly it is a greater kindness to keep a man from falling, than it is to lift him up when he is down. And 'tis much greater charity to keep men from beggery than 'tis to relieve them afterwards. And by upholding such sinking families we do not onely keep them from beggery but idleness, and all the dismal consequences that are wont to wait upon it: I deny not but there may be charity in giving to a begger, but I am sure there is much greater charity in preventing beggery. And if he do good that gives a begger, yet he does it more uncertainly, and is sometimes deceived; and helps to nourish a vice, when he thinks to help a poor man. When we give to beggers we many times know not what we do, and what we give is sometimes lost; and neither does good to the giver or receiver. But he that helps the master of a poor family, and aids his diligence, helps a great many at once: It is a relief to him and all that depend upon him. There are some that do not fall alone, and so keep them from sinking is a kind-

kindness to them and all their poor dependants. There are some Tradesmen that cannot fail but 'twill be to the loss and impoverishment of many others. And here I cannot but mention the wisdom and Charity of those Persons, who have taken great care of the poor of *Northampton*, since that Town was burnt. There hath been some Relief sent thither from well-disposed Christians (I pray God increase mens Charity to that afflicted place) to be bestowed upon the poor. And (as I am informed) it hath been wisely Distributed. Those that had the care of it giving larger proportions of it to those Men who were Traders, and Employed other poor People under them. And in doing so, they relieved many at once, and preserved among them the Trade and Employment of the Town.

In the next place, I would Recommend the Widow and the Fatherless. *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to Visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World,* James 1. 27. I do not think any Condition in the World more Compassionable than that of a poor Widow. She is bereft of her greatest Worldly Comfort and support; and indeed the one half of her self is taken from her; and yet the whole burden lies upon her. Her strength is less, and yet her burden as great, not to say greater than ever it was. And it being thus, she is a great Object of our Pity and Compassion, and the care of her is devolved upon us by the All-wise Providence of God. And accordingly we find that the Christian Church did at its first Formation and beginning take care of the Widows, *Acts 6.* And *St. Paul* Commands us to *Honour*; that is, to assist and help the Widows, *that are Widows indeed,* in *Timothy 5.* And who they are, he tells us, *v. 5.* And we find that God declares himself greatly concerned for the Widows. He styles himself a Father of the Fatherless, and a Judge of the Widows, *Psal. 68, 5.* And promises that he will establish the Border of the Widow, *Prov. 31, 23.* And God hath given great demonstrations of his care for them. He Rescues the Widow of *Obadiah* and her Sons by a Miracle. We Read of but three in the Old Testament that were raised from Death to Life, and one of them was the Son of the Widow of *Sarepta*, *1 Kings 17.* Nor do we Read of any greater Number that our Saviour raised; and one of them was a Widows Son of *Naim*, *Luke 7.*

12. They are the care of God, and they ought to be ours.

I add, that the Condition of Prisoners is very pitiable : I mean those that are Imprisoned for small Debts, or that are detained for want of Fees. And there are many such, who for want of a little Money are bereft of their Liberty. which is so dear to us all. And besides that, they Live miserably in those places, and are not only rendred Useless Members of the Common wealth, but are (I fear too frequently) Debauched in their manners in those places. But what the Condition of these Men is, and upon what small Accounts they are frequently detained there, I need not in this place represent to you, who have been the Happy Instrument of Delivering great Numbers of them from their Confinement.

I shall not need to say that the Redeeming of Slaves from their Captivity is another great act of Mercy. For if a Prison at home be grievous, what must it be to be in Slavery among Infidels and Unbelievers ?

There are many other Objects of Compassion, and ways of bestowing wealth to great and Noble purposes, *viz.* The putting poor Children to School (which I wish were the publick Care and Charge, as much as the providing for their Bodily subsistence;) the encouraging hopeful Students that are forced out of want to leave the Schools of Learning too soon; Buying provisions when they are cheap, and Selling them out again without gain to the poor when they are dear, &c. But I must remember that I am confined, and have not the Liberty to enlarge now : perhaps, I may hereafter have time to speak more largely of the several ways and honest arts of doing good in the world. For there are more ways of doing good than Alms-giving : And I am now limited to that Argument, and must not trouble you with too long an Epistle.

2. The Alms-giver that would with his Charity do the most good to the Poor, will do well so to contrive his Alms, that the Receiver may perceive he intends him a farther kindness : My meaning is, let every good Man aim at the good of his Brothers Soul in the Mercy he shews him. This is the Noblest kindness of all; Let the Poor Man discern that he that Relieves the Needs of his Body, hath a greater Design upon him, and that he aims at his Eternal welfare. Our Saviour went about doing good : And

D

so

so it was that his works he did were such as did at once give *Relief* and *Instruction*. And when he shewed *Mercy* to the *Bodies*, he did at the same time shew another to the *Souls* of Men. His Miracles were Demonstrations, not of his *Power* alone, but of his *Kindness* also. And that was not a single kindness neither, but a double one. VVhen he confirmed his Doctrine, he healed the Sick, and restored the Blind. And as the Sick and Blind received a great Advantage in their Sight and Health, so did the Souls of Men as he confirmed his Doctrine, and by that means strengthened our Faith. Our Saviours Relief and Instruction went together: And as he *fed* the Multitude, so he *Taught* them too. When he Cured the Body of him that had been infirm thirty eight years, he is also mindful of his *Soul*, and bids him *sin no more*, lest some worse thing overtake him. Our Alms give us a great Advantage of doing good to Mens Souls. For by them we may encourage Vertue and sincere Piety. And then we do Effectually *recommend* it when we do *Reward* it. And he that Receives a bounty, will listen to our Instruction and Advice: Our Liberality joyned with our Exhortations will render them more likely to prevail.

'Tis an incredible Force that *Kindness* hath, it will prevail where all other ways are ineffectual. And when this kindness is joyned with the Evidence of Truth, we shall be most likely to prevail. When *Mercy* and *Truth* meet thus together, it may be hoped they may prevail upon the sinner to lead a New Life. I have often thought, that if he that Preaches to the *Poor* could plentifully *Relieve* them also, he would not fail of great Success. He must be a very Obdurate sinner that could stand out against the *Evidence of Truth*, and the Force of *Mercy* and *Compassion*. Truth it self hath a mighty Energy and Force, and 'twould alone prevail upon us if we would suffer it, *Exercere regnum suum*, to Rule over us. But if we joyn Mercy with it 'twill be greatly strengthened. 'Twere to be wished that all the Ministers of Religion were able to relieve the Needy: They might by this means (with Gods blessing) render their Sermons and other Spiritual Advices more available. They might with their Charity they shew their Bodies, win upon their Souls; and be Instruments of the Salvation of more of their People. However, they and all good

good Men must Design this in the Alms they do bestow: VVe are Obliged to relieve the poor, but especially *the Household of Faith*, Gal. 6. 10. And if they are to be first regarded, 'twill be great Charity to endeavour to increase that Number, and by our Alms to encourage Godliness and Vertue. And therefore when we give, let our Alms serve the ends of Piety and real goodness; let them advance as much as may be the good of Souls. Let us give, especially to those that are good, to those that frequent the publick worship of God, to those that are willing to submit to Instruction, and to those especially that bring up their Children well. Let us rise in our kindness as we discern them more diligent in Gods Service. VVe may with our other Alms give good Books, such as may serve to their Instruction and Devotion, and enjoyn them to a constant attendance upon the worship of God. In a word, let us so give, that the Poor Man may perceive we have higher and more generous designs upon him, than what concerns this present Life: That he may Learn to set some price upon his Soul which he finds us to value and prize at an high rate.

3. Tis Advisable, that the Alms-giver bestow his Charity with his own hands: That he do both inquire out for the Needy, and afterwards Relieve them himself. Let him go to Prisons, to the Houses of the poorest, examine their store, and pry into their Necessities. Let him visit Sick and Wounded poor People, and dress their Wounds with his own Hands if he can, or at least, see them Dressed. 'Tis a kindness to help the Poor with our Purse; but 'tis a greater to visit them our selves, and to bestow our Charity with our own Hands. The good Mans Presence adds a new Kindness to his Alms. The Sick and the Poor are Refreshed with the Company and Conversation, as well as the Alms of the good Man. The Presence of the Charitable Man revives them: They are joyed to think that they are not altogether Neglected. Besides, the good Man by this means will be sure the Work which he intended, is done. He cannot fear a miscarriage now, and he hath a fair Occasion of Commending Vertue and Religion to the poor he visits, and his Counsel is most likely to prevail. Besides, by this means he will better Learn to pity the Afflicted, and to Bless God for what he himself enjoys. 'Twere well we

*Hieronym.
Epitaph. Fa-
biolæ. Ad Ocea-
num.*

would now and then go to Prisons and Hospitals, and the poorest Houses and Families. This course would be much for our own Interest and the Poores also. 'Tis a most Christian Office to do this, And would well become Persons of the greatest Quality and the fairest Circumstances. But this may not be expected; there will be but few that will take this care upon them. And, perhaps, some cannot bear it, and others cannot find time through the urgency and multiplicity of their other Affairs. Such as these however ought to help with their Estates, and whoever doth so doth well: But then 'tis Advisable in the next place,

4. That he make use of Men of great Integrity to bestow his Charity for him. Thanks be to God there are those that spend a great part of their time in finding out and helping the Poor. There are those that carry on Charitable Designs, and Labour greatly in it. And I know some such whom Malice it self can hardly fasten an Accusation upon; Men who do design, and by the assistance of others, Effect great things; such works of Charity and Compassion, that no Man can doubt but he hath sufficient grounds both to *trust* the *Men*, and *encourage* their *work*. And indeed it is very needful there should be some such Men as these especially about this great City. The Apostles (when the *Number of Disciples was multiplied*) thought fit to constitute certain Officers on purpose to take care of the Poor, *Acts* 6. And there had need be always a number of Men attending upon this great Affair: And they had need be men very Exemplary for Piety, men of Leisure and Estates, of great Prudence and Humility; of a merciful temper, and an inflexible Justice: Men that are great Lovers of Piety and true goodness where ever they meet it: Not Devoted fondly to one Sect or party of Men, nor yet Admirers of Theories and Speculations of Nice and Curious Opinions. And besides all this, if they had the favour and allowance of publick Authority, and enabled with power also, they might be greatly Serviceable to the Community. 'Tis true, every Parish hath by Law certain Men appointed to be *Over-seers of the Poor*: And though this provision which the Law hath made be good, yet it is still a Question, whether it be sufficient or not. We know that these Men are Chosen in Course and Order, according to the Houses,

Houses, or by their standing and continuance in their several Parishes. And then it may be supposed it may sometime happen that those may be chosen that are not fit for that Employment, either because they are men that cannot afford to attend upon that work, or for want of some other qualification which that Office does require. Besides, they are limited in their Office, and receive their Laws as well as their Supplies from the Neighbourhood that chose them: And though they are Obligated to keep men from starving (if Complaint be made) yet they are frequently over-charged with the Numbers of the Poor they take the care of. And there are other works of Mercy that we ought to be concerned for besides the bare preserving the Poor from starving. Besides all that hath been said, the Modest man that Complains not is all this while unprovided for. When the seven Deacons were Chosen to dispense the Charity of the Church, 'tis said, that the *Number of the Disciples was Multiplied*. And those words, perhaps, may intimate to us the Occasion of choosing these Officers. What the Number of the Disciples was then, we are not indeed certain; but yet we do not Read before that, of any determinate Number above that of Five Thousand in all, *Acts* 4. 4. And how many of them were poor, and stood in Need of Relief we know not; but yet supposing the poor among them many, there were seven Deacons to provide for them: And very probable it is that some of our Parishes may have as many poor as were amongst them, though not so many Devout and Pious men to take care for their Relief. I am sure that the Relief of the poor is the *Common Interest*, and I see not but there might well be appointed some *Common Patrons* and *Fathers* of the Poor, who might make it a *Common Care*. When the Deacons were Chosen and set apart by the Apostles, 'tis said immediately thereupon, *That the Word of God Increased, and the Number of the Disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great Company of the Priests were Obedient to the Faith, Acts* 6. 7. That was the Consequent of that Blessed work. And certain I am that 'tis much for the Interest and Advancement of Religion, that all its poor Profelytes be well provided for. And 'tis a work truly pious to contrive a mean how this may be done, and contribute what we can towards it.

Charity directed; Or,

5. He that would do most good with his Alms will do well so to bestow them that the receiver may be kept from *Idleness*: as well as starving. He that keeps men at work does a double kindness: He provides them with bread and employment too. I shall not need to represent how many are the sad consequents, and temptations of a poor and an idle life. It is sometimes greater charity to *lend* than to *give*. He that lends a trading man encourages his diligence; and the borrower takes pains that he may repay. It would be a great charity to employ those that are able to work, and 'tis no charity to relieve those that will not. It would be of great advantage to the community to find out a way to employ all that are able to work: And as it would be no hard matter to do it in the city, with the united charity of many, so it would ease us of many begging people, and prevent their growing numbers.

I shall onely adde to what I have said that it is advisable that he that gives do it seasonably; we say, *he gives twice that gives quickly*. A seasonable relief prevents a greater charge. 'Tis much easier to prevent the fall of an house than to build it up when it is once down.

And thus Sir, I have given you my thoughts how a good man may give to the best advantage to himself, and to the greatest profit of the receiver. But still there are very many will desire to be excused from giving Alms, and that because they are not able. And indeed if they are not they have a just excuse. But there are too many pretend this because they are not willing, and too many others who render themselves unable by their negligence and ill husbandry. I shall therefore shew

Thirdly, How a good man may so order his affairs as to have something to bestow.

I make no question but that a provision might be raised for the poors relief and employment without hazarding mens estates, or greatly impairing them, which is the Infidel objection that worldly men have against works of mercy: And how this may be done I am now to shew.

First, by retrenching of superfluities. There are very many that Trifle away those Sums yearly which if they were united would amount to a very great treasure, big enough to employ
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and relieve great numbers of indigent. We might save much which we spend *intemperately*, we eat and drink not only largely, but we do it with great Art, and Cost. That which we might spare would preserve the poor from hunger and from starving; and we our selves would enjoy a greater health, and have lesser accounts to give hereafter. 'Tis for our health to eat and drink sparingly, and it may turn to the great advantage of the poor here, and of our selves hereafter. Again, we spend much in our attire that might be saved without any loss to us, and with great advantage to the poor; What we spend in this vanity would serve to cloath many that want a Covering. What we trifle away in Sports and Shows, in Games and Wagers, in unnecessary Beasts, and supernumerarie Servants, in Visits and Feastings, in needless Journeys, and avoidable Law-suits, in pursuing our vain and ambitious Desires, would serve to many and great purposes. We might at as cheap a rate build Hospitals, erect Work-houses found Schools, maintain young Students, endow small Vicarages; in a word, do Great and Noble works, where now we trifle, and spend our money for that which does not profit. But besides that we spend much in this trifling manner, we spend very much upon our sins and follies. And they that have nothing for a poor widow or fatherless child, that begs for the Lords sake, have it for their lusts and follies. They maintain their *vices* at great rates when they refuse to *give a little* to a charitable work. How often do men contend at a Tavern who shall pay the score, when they will refuse the next object of Charity that offers it self. They are our Lusts undo us, and not our Charity. If we loved our God, we should love our Brother; And if we did this as we ought, we should deny our selves *some things* that his wants might be supplied. And certainly our love is very cold if we cannot part with an *ornament*, or a *vanity* to supply his *reall* needs. We may help him and not hurt our selves: What is to us *superfluous*, and we can well spare, will relieve his *necessities*. It astonishes me when I see how many abound in all the Comforts of life, even to the greatest superfluity, and yet have no sense of these men that want bread. And it is something strange to me how these men can sleep quietly amidst all their abundance and superfluity with which their houses are stored, when so many of their poor brethren want bread

*Unde bestias
Erras, hinc cap-
tos redime;
unde seras pas-
cis hinc pau-
peres ale —
Lactant. l. 6.
c. 12.*

*Qua militas est
parietes fulge-
re gemmis, et
Christum in
paupere peri-
clitari? Hieron.
Ad Pamma-
chium.*

bread to eat, and garments to hide their nakedness. Methinks they should take little pleasure in their pomp and gaiety if they did but consider the needs of those that want relief.

Secondly, By giving that or part of that which is looked on by us as very contingent, or desperate, and which we set little by, and do not much esteem. As for example, suppose a man some time play at innocent games for his recreation, and play for something; 'Tis to be supposed a wise and good man will play for no more than he is willing to lose, and then he may well bestow that upon the poor, or some proportion of it: Or again, suppose he do not play, yet methinks he may set aside so much as he would be well content to lose. Again, suppose a man receives a desperate debt, which he gave for lost (and such things do sometimes happen) or have goods arrived which he was informed, and did believe were lost, in this case methinks he should be inclined to give at least some proportion to the poor out of gratitude to God: For as of old those men that were thought to be dead were not received into their houses the ordinary way; so why should we not separate some part of these goods at least, and by this means procure a blessing upon the rest? We sometimes recover what we value at a great rate, and that against the rules of reason and beyond our hopes, and in this case we may very well spare a part of its price at least upon the poor: And may reasonably believe that God preserved it to us for this very end. The same is the case of Lotteries of all sorts: He that uses them renders what he has the certain possession of uncertain and contingent, and sure our charity is small if we cannot devote that to the service of the poor which we are content to render uncertain to our selves. Again, a good man falls into the hands of Thieves and Robbers: He is surprized and they are about to rifle him, and he thinks he comes off well without the loss of his life; but at that moment some company intervenes, and the good man is preserved, and all he had is safe; In this case 'tis hard if he have not so much Charity to give *something* of what he saves to the poor, when he would readily have parted with *all* of it to these *violent men*. Or thus; we have a suit at Law, and are very like to be cast, and in our thoughts give up our cause, but some unexpected providence intervenes and we get

*Plutarch. Quest.
Roman.*

get the day. In this case we shall do well to lay aside something to a charitable use. Once more, Those men that trade much, make frequent bargaines and sales: And so it is, the buyer beates down the price, and at length he and the seller are near an agreement; The difference is small that then remains, and usually it is parted (and sometimes after asseverations on both sides to the contrary) but suppose every trading man that deals for greater matters would instead of dividing the smaller sum, consent that it should be laid aside for the poor: In doing so a stock would soon be raised towards the releif of the poor, and a great blessing would attend upon this way of trading. Thus in every sale something might be laid by, and but little felt. That this is a very usuall practice in some places I have heard, and can tell where it is in use in this City, and could wish 'twere more common than it is. I am sure there are some things we may part with and not feel which would be towards the poores releif a great supply.

Thirdly, By setting aside a certain proportion of our yearly Gains. There are some lay up, and add yearly to their estate, and these men cannot plead poverty: Now if such men as these would before hand resolve to lay aside a certain proportion of their yearly gains, they would do but what becomes them well, and this course would raise a great stock for those that need. This laying by for the poor the *Apostle* commends, and he does it in words that rise higher than what I have mentioned. *Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.* 1 Cor. 16. 2. *As God hath prospered him,* so we render those words. But they are observed to import something more; For 'tis not [as] in the text, but [whatsoever] I shall not therefore press men to give away all their gains; The case may be presumed extraordinary which the *Apostle* commends, but yet still a proportion we shall do well to lay by, and this men may do without any fear of wasting their estates. I shall not undertake to prescribe what proportion this ought to be. I do not look upon it as a thing prescribed, and if it were it would be strict Justice and not Charity. God hath not determined the proportion, but every good man must consider what is becoming and agreeable,

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and have a care he do not take too short Measures. There have been very good Men that I could tell you of, that have laid aside the tenth of their Income to Charitable Uses, and these Men have seen cause doubtless so to do. I shall not now enquire into the Reasons of their pitching upon that proportion: Methinks it should not be thought an unreasonable thing to invite Men to imitate them, at least so far, as to lay by the tenth of their Yearly *gains* and *increase*, if not the tenth of their Yearly Income. That we are Obliged to lay by some considerable proportion, no man can doubt, that considers one thing, and that is, what was required of, and practised among the Jews.

And here I shall take an occasion to consider what provision God made for the poor under the Law of *Moses*: And one would think we should easily believe that we ought not to come short of what they were obliged to, under the Gospel of our Blessed Saviour. And the provision that we find amongst them, was this which follows.

1. The Third Years Tithing, which is called among the Jewish Writers, *The Tithes of the Poor*. Every third Year they were obliged to set apart the Tenth of their Increase (which far exceeds the Tenth of Rent) for the Use of the poor, *Deut.* 14. 28. 26. 12. We should think this a great proportion, it being (if we disperse it into every Year proportionably) no less than the Thirtieth part of every Years growth and increase.

2. The Sabbatical Year. Every seventh Year their Land was to rest (and then the Owners of the Land were neither to Sow nor Reap, nor claim propriety) and that too that *the Poor of the People might Eat*, *Exod.* 23. 11.

3. The prohibition of Usury. Which without doubt must needs be a great Advantage to the poor. And that Usury in this case was strictly forbidden, is plain, *Exod.* 22. 25. *Deut.* 23. 19. And lest we might suppose that in this case men were not Obligated to Lend, and to Relieve their Brothers Needs, it was expressly Commanded notwithstanding this prohibition, that they should

should relieve their poor Brethren, *Lev. 25. 35.* And surely this prohibition of Usury was a great Relief to the Necessitous.

4. The Law which Related to their Reaping, when they were obliged to leave the *Corners* of their *Fields* as well as the *Gleanings* of their *Harvest*, *Lev. 19. 9. 23. 22.* And whatever these Gleanings were, yet sure the *Corners* of their *Fields* were considerable which they left standing and unreaped for the poor. For though the Law did not determine how much of the Field they were to leave, yet we are told by one of the Jewish Writers, that no less than one part of sixty was the proportion adjudged meet by their Wise Men.

Vide Maimonid. H. M. Tanach Antim.

5. The Law that related to the forgotten Sheaf, the Gathering their Olives and Grapes. This was another Merciful provision for the poor: *When thou Cuttest down thine Harvest in thy Field, and hast forgot a Sheaf in the Field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it, it shall be for the Stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine Hands. When thou beatest thine Olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again, it shall be for the stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow. When thou Gatherest the Grapes of thy Vineyard, thou shalt not Glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow, Deut. 24. 19, 20, 21.*

6. The Law that Required Alms-giving among the Jews. They were Obligated to open their Hand wide unto the poor, *Deut. 15. 8.* And this Law of Alms-giving the Author above-named mentions over and above those other Laws above-named in favour of the poor. He tells us that they were Obligated to this more than the other affirmative precepts. And that 'twas the Custom in *Israel* to have amongst them Collectors for the poor, that from the beginning to the end of the Week Gathered and Distributed alms: They had their Chests, the small and greater, stored with provisions for the poor of their City, as well as those that Lived else-where: and he puts the Case that a poor Man beg of his Neighbour to relieve his Needs, and that his Neighbour

11. cap. 7.

be not able to supply all his Necessity, how far in this Case he stands Obligated to relieve him: and his answer is, that to give him a fifth part of his Goods towards his relief, is generous; to give him a tenth, is Moderate, but to give him less, is an argument of an Evil Eye.

I shall not need to say any more than this, that he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and the less Mercy we shew, the less we shall receive. I shall only add the Excellent words of the Apostle: *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of Necessity, for God loveth a chearful Giver. And God is able to make all Grace abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,* 2 Cor. 9. 7, 8.

Fourthly, By denying our selves some little satisfaction, that we may have somewhat to bestow upon the poor. And here will be room for Persons of mean Estates to shew kindnesse to the Poor. We ought to please our Neighbour for his good, and 'twill be worth our while to do it with some Displeasure to our selves. Suppose now we go in Cloaths that are cheap and plain, that we eat somewhat the less, that we avoid some innocent Divertisement, and what we save this way give to the poor. Our Books somewhere tell us, that when *Tarentum* was Besieged by the *Romans*, their Neighbours at *Rhegium* Fasted every tenth day, and sent to the Besieged the Victuals which they should have eaten themselves; A rare Example of Heathens, and that which may shame many Titulats and false Christians. If the Love of God be in us, we shall not think much to Fast, and to bestow the Meal we save upon our hungry, and almost starved Brother. And for us thus to Fast will be acceptable to God, and profitable to our Brother. And we have but little sense of Gods stupendous Mercy and kindness to us, if we refuse to do more for our Brother than this amounts to. It will well become us when our Brothers Necessities are great, to deny our selves those things which we might else very Lawfully allow to our selves. It was a very ill Character the Prophet gave of *Israel*, where he tells us, That they did lie upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their

their Couches, that they chaunted to the Sound of the Viol, and inclined to themselves Instruments of Musick, and did drink Wine in Bowls, and annoint themselves with the chief Oynment; when in the mean time they were not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph, Amos 6. 4, 5, 6. 'Twas generously said by Uriah, when he was perswaded to go to his House after his return from the Camp. *The Ark, and Israel (says he) and Judah abide in Tents, and my Lord Joab, and the Servants of my Lord are Encamped in the open Fields; shall I then go into mine House to Eat and to Drink, &c?* 2 Sam. 11. 11. Certainly if we esteem our selves Members of the same Body, we shall not find our selves much at ease when our fellow-Members are in pain: And shall not be hard to be perswaded to undergo some inconvenience for the Advantage of our Brethren.

The Apostle goes higher still than any thing hath been said yet. If we have nothing to give, he would have us Labour for something, that we may have to give to him that needeth, Eph. 4. 28. We ought to Labour rather than be a burden to others, and so we must do also on the behalf of our poor Neighbour, that he may not want what is Needful for him. And if this be difficult, and an hard saying, how shall we be able to lay down our Life for him?

And if after all this, we are not able to Relieve a poor Man, yet let us Pity him, and Pray for him; do what we can, and pray to the God of all Mercies to support and help him. For there are more ways of being Serviceable to the poor than Alms-giving. Every Man cannot do that. But they that cannot Relieve, can Pity; they can Pray to God, and intercede with Men; they can give the Poor a good Example, and good Counsell: They may be able to Advise, and to study ways for their Advantage. And he that studies the Art of well-doing, and recommends it to others, serves the Needy, though he be not able to give them Money.

And thus, Sir, I have given you my thoughts about this affair; and I fear I have, by doing so, given you too great a trouble also. I am very sensible that this Matter deserves better to be considered.

And

Charity directed; Or,

And I am far from thinking that I have said what the Argument deserves, or requires: Neither my Occasions, nor other Circumstances will afford me either leisure or power to do that. If I have suggested any thing that may do any good, and contribute towards the Help of any afflicted Person, I shall think I have great cause to bless God on that behalf. I have however complied with your Request (I might say Importunity) and am satisfied with this, that though I have not said what might have been said, yet I have not declined so good a Cause, but have said what at present I could. I shall onely add, that I am,

Sir,

Your most Faithful Friend,

R. K.

Decemb. 13.

1675.

FINIS.

